

but will bear a Social Security tax burden of roughly \$2,140. Now, this family is then eligible to receive some \$2,400 from the earned income tax credit, nearly \$260 more than its entire tax burden.

A family earning \$28,000 a year—and not eligible for the earned income tax credit—would have 57 percent of its income tax bill and 17 percent of its total Federal tax bill erased by the \$500 per child tax credit.

This is an important part of tax relief to these families that do not qualify but still make under \$35,000 a year.

Family tax relief, I believe, should not be means tested. Every working family in this country is overtaxed, thus every working family, regardless of income, should be eligible for a \$500 per child tax credit. The Tax Code should not penalize children simply because of their parents' income.

Now, along with family tax relief, the Minnesotans with whom I met during the past recess are demanding a balanced Federal budget with or without a balanced budget amendment. And if that means putting the Federal Government on a strict low-fat diet, then so be it.

One thing I heard over and over again during my town meetings, from Minnesotans who pay their own bills and balance their own budget, is that if they can do it, then the Federal Government can do it as well.

One thing is very clear: The budget can be balanced, and we can do it without gutting the vital programs on which millions of Americans depend. We will do it by containing the growth of Government while continuing to meet the needs of America's families, children, and senior citizens.

By streamlining Federal bureaucracy and sending the money back to the State governments in the form of block grants, Minnesotans know that they will have more power, not less power, more resources, not fewer, and new and better opportunities.

I have every confidence that the people of Minnesota can direct those resources and provide for those in need better than Washington bureaucrats could ever hope to do.

That is my motivation as we move forward during these next 100 days, and it is my hope that every Senator remembers the messages that they have heard over the recess and join in the effort to enact what we call the people's agenda.

We need to restrict or restrain the growth of spending in the Federal Government, but we also need tax relief for Minnesota families and for the Nation's families. We cannot have one without the other. I hope very strongly that as we move forward in these next 100 days we will be able to provide some of this long sought tax relief for middle-class American families.

I thank the Chair. I would now like to turn the floor over to my colleague, the Senator from Missouri [Mr. ASHCROFT].

Mr. ASHCROFT addressed the Chair. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FAIRCLOTH). The Senator from Missouri.

The first half hour of time which was reserved has expired, so the Senator has up to 5 minutes.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I would ask unanimous consent that I can speak as if in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to citizens all across America who are recognizing the observation of the National Day of Prayer. It is a time during which the people of America pray for this country and pray for those of us who have the responsibility to lead, not just at the national level, but at the local level as well. So in city halls across America, in State capitals, and here in the Nation's Capital, individuals are seeking to invoke the presence of God upon the deliberations of the Government, and upon the Nation as a whole.

I am especially grateful for this fitting activity and for the fact that as a nation we occasionally stop to remember the Almighty. In particular, I am pleased to express appreciation on behalf of myself and many others to Shirley Dobson who is leading the National Day of Prayer this year.

As our Nation heals from the wounds inflicted upon us by the Oklahoma City tragedy, and as we continue to confront daily the tragedies of death and violence that seem to plague our land, it is fitting we would call upon God to give thanks for the blessings we have enjoyed.

The Old Testament book of Chronicles provides a worthwhile guide to our times. It says: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from Heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." Mr. President, I do not think there is a more noble aspiration than the desire of America to be a land of healing.

Our Nation has embodied this attitude of humility and reverence before God from the very earliest days of its existence. During the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin rose to say: "If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?"

There is little question but that we owe a debt of gratitude to Almighty God for the blessings he has continued to bestow upon us. As George Washington prayed: "Almighty God; we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt * * * most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with * * * charity, humility and a pacific temper of mind."

I believe those are the kinds of sentiments we all ought to be expressing today. I pray God's blessing upon this land, and I thank those who are assembling across the country to remember our need for guidance.

A BALANCED BUDGET

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I want to address the issue of a balanced budget, but I want to start by talking about the shifting balance of Federal-State power. Last week, in *United States versus Lopez*, the Supreme Court held that a 1990 Federal statute did not "substantially affect" interstate commerce. While the decision did not overturn any precedents, it marked a sharp departure from the modern Court's expansive view of congressional power to regulate commerce. By limiting Congress' ability to use the commerce clause to legislate social policy, the Court highlighted the benefits of the Federal system envisioned by the Framers, and outlined in the Constitution. Moreover, they acknowledged what the American people have recognized for quite some time: That a Congress with the power to do everything for you, also has the power to take everything from you.

In the Senate, we have just begun to discuss spending priorities for the coming fiscal year. When the budget resolution comes before this Chamber, our actions will help shape the ongoing debate over State power within the Federal system.

The question we must ask is not what power the Federal Government ought to have, but what powers have been extended by the people. We must be ever mindful of the fact that the powers conferred upon the Federal Government by the Constitution have proscribed limits. Clearly, a National Government that has a debt of \$4.9 trillion—that is over \$18,000 for every man, woman, and child—has forgotten this fact.

Mr. President, if efforts are not made to limit spending, the Federal Government will no longer be able to fulfill its most basic constitutional obligations. In just 17 years, spending on entitlement and the national debt will consume all tax revenues; Medicare will be bankrupt in just 6 years; and in FY 1997, we will pay more in interest payments on the national debt than we will spend on national defense.

Last November, the American people spoke with a clarity and an intensity seldom heard in American government. What was their message? Return to us the ability to control our own lives, our own future, our own destinies. This was not some radical, foreign concept, it was the message of the founding—the message embodied in the capstone of the Bill of Rights, the 10th amendment, which reads: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to